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**SENEGAL**

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### USAID provides support to disadvantaged children in Senegal

Thousands of young Muslim students in Senegal are getting a warm meal every day under a pilot support activity benefiting Koranic schools near the country's northern border with Mauritania.

The 18-month, \$307,000 project is helping improve students' living and learning conditions through better health and nutrition and strengthen community participation in the schools to ensure that children receive proper care. Already under the project, nearly 4,000 students have received more than 500,000 meals made from American wheat and rice. The U.S. Government through USAID also provided first aid kits, water filters, and hundreds of insecticide-treated mosquito nets and funds to build or repair classrooms and latrines. Students also benefit from deworming treatment twice a year.

"I am impressed with the commitment of the local communities to bring about better conditions for all, including the children learning at the Koranic schools," said Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs, who, along with USAID/Senegal Director Olivier Carduner visited Mboumba in mid-December.

"Koranic schools are primary sources of education, as 20 percent of Senegalese children attend only Koranic schools," she said. "We are pleased to be in a position to lend support to children in these schools."



Richard Nyberg, USAID

Girls and boys in the village of Mboumba receive food and school supplies from USAID at their Koranic school to help them learn under suitable conditions.

Staff members of Counterpart International, the project implementers, are helping develop a modern curriculum covering mathematics, life skills subjects, vocational training, health and HIV/AIDS prevention techniques, and income generating activities. Through the project, the nine supported Koranic schools will liaise and strengthen ties to the regional and national Koranic school network, sharing best practices on how to better provide for the educational, nutritional and health needs of children in Koranic schools.

"By helping the students, you are helping the households as well," Thierno Mamadou Bass, a key religious leader told the Ambassador and her delegation. "The help is immeasurable. What the program has done here is unheard of and we see the good things America is doing for us," he said. "The whole village is full of praises for you and the program."



Richard Nyberg, USAID

U.S. Ambassador, Janice L. Jacobs, center, and USAID/Senegal Director, Olivier Carduner, distribute hot meals to children and youth learning at a Koranic school in Mboumba, northern Senegal. Also pictured, right, is Thierno Mamadou Bass of Mboumba.

## USAID launches \$75 million health program in Senegal

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched a five-year, \$75 million program to help improve the health of Senegalese families, in particular mothers and young children living in rural areas.

Covering 28 health districts in the regions of Kaolack, Kolda, Louga, Thiès, and Ziguinchor, the USAID program will include activities promoting in health policy and financing, measures to combat HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, maternal and child health, family planning, and community health.

The new program, which runs until 2011, extends American assistance to the region of Kolda, which had not benefited from USAID-funded activities in the health sector. Also, the regions of Dakar and St. Louis will receive support in the areas of family planning and efforts to curb sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. Throughout the activities, USAID encourages its government and civil society partners to carry out the work with complete transparency, underscoring the need to remain accountable to their communities and constituencies.

"The USAID health program that we celebrate today is an extension of the wonderful experiences that we have shared over the years," Oumar Sarr, Senegal's minister of state buildings, housing, and construction, standing in for the health minister, told the audience the program launch ceremony in the capital Dakar.

"It is important to stress the important role that the U.S. government plays through USAID," he said, adding that the support to the health sector "is much appreciated by our health professionals and our population".

Urging the Government of Senegal to invest more funds for health, the U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, Janice L. Jacobs, expressed the wish that health services would soon be better positioned to "save lives through newborn care, assisted births, family planning, treatment and prevention of malaria and pneumonia at the community level, where this assistance is needed the most."



Richard Nyberg, USAID

U.S. Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs, second from left, USAID/Senegal Director Olivier Carduner, left and Senegalese government officials launch USAID's new health program in Dakar.

Minister Sarr noted that the "political will, expressed at the highest government levels for adequate funding for our health programs will never be compromised."



Richard Nyberg, USAID

Actors pass along key health messages during skits to launch USAID's new health program in the capital, Dakar.

Since 1979, USAID/Senegal's health program has supported the Ministry of Health and local communities in efforts to reduce maternal and child deaths, prevent infectious disease and other illness, and help people live healthier lives. In addition to fighting major diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, USAID strengthens national and local health systems that provide preventive and curative services for the population, supports family planning programs to allow couples to have children when they want them, and helps communities plan and finance their own health services.

In particular, assistance provided by USAID for diagnosis and treatment of childhood diseases, vaccination and nutrition programs, and support to community health hut and district clinics to treat illnesses such as pneumonia and malaria contributed significantly to a 13% reduction of infant mortality since 1997.

## Testing biopesticides in Senegal

To better combat crop damage due to desert locusts and grasshoppers, USAID/Senegal is financing new tests of low-dose biopesticide. Recently, the Government of Senegal's crop protection division and Virginia Tech University sprayed grasshoppers at Khelcom in central Senegal. Initial results are promising, and further tests are scheduled before the biopesticide can be used on a broader scale in West Africa.



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